

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON SYSTEM  
ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM**

**SECTION: Administrative Operations**

**NUMBER: 01.H.01**

**AREA: General**

**SUBJECT: Social Media Policy**

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1. PURPOSE

The University of Houston System and its component institutions (“University”) encourages the use of social media to connect with others, including students, employees, alumni, fans, and the University. Social media sites are excellent venues to communicate and encourage engaging discussions about University current events, issues, accolades, organizations and people. This policy defines the rules and procedures for the use of Official University Social Media Sites (as defined in Section 3.3) to ensure that university-sponsored social media is both legal and in compliance with University policies.

2. POLICY

2.1. All Official University Social Media Sites must adhere to state and federal laws and regulations, and University policies. Only public information may be posted on Official University Social Media Sites. Official University Social Media Sites must not contain sensitive personal information as defined in [Texas Business and Commerce Code, Chapter 521](#), or other confidential information as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ([HIPAA](#)), and National Collegiate Athletic Association ([NCAA](#)) Regulations, as applicable. Any sensitive personal information or other confidential information posted on an Official University Social Media Site must be removed by the site administrator as soon as practically possible upon discovery.

2.2. The University is committed to fostering an educational environment that allows for freedoms of speech and expression in accordance with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. However, the University will not tolerate any activity or posting on an Official University Social Media Site that loses First Amendment protection such as any unlawful, defamatory, or obscene (as defined by Texas and federal law) activity or posting. The University reserves the right to remove any such posting without notice. The University also reserves the right to refer social media activity to the applicable social media platform and/or appropriate authorities for appropriate action.

2.3. All Official University Social Media Sites must respect intellectual property rights, federal [Copyright law](#) and University policies.

- 2.4. Employee Use – When using social media as a part of their official duties, and/or when presenting oneself in social media settings as a university representative, employees must comply with applicable University policies governing employee behavior and acceptable use of electronic and information resources.
- 2.5. Primary administrative rights for Official University Social Media Sites will be assigned only to University employees. Official University Social Media Sites will have a minimum of two administrators to ensure that the site is consistently managed. Should one administrator be unavailable, the second assigned administrator will manage the site. At least one of the two administrators should be a permanent University employee.
- 2.6. All content on Official University Social Media Sites must comply with [1 TAC 206](#) and [1 TAC 213](#) to ensure that the information is accessible and usable by people with the widest range of capabilities possible. Accessibility requirements apply to the content on the social media tool, not the features of the tool. Therefore, if the Official University Social Media Site does not use an inaccessible feature, it is not in violation of accessibility requirements. It is the responsibility of the Official University Social Media Site administrator to ensure social media content is fully accessible.
- 2.7. All University Social media sites must comply with any approved applicable University branding standards.
- 2.8. Records Retention – Content posted by the University or the public on an Official University Social Media Site is a state record and is subject to the State of Texas Records Retention requirements unless it is content duplicated from another source or transitory information of temporary usefulness. University site administrators are responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable record retention requirements for content posted on their sites.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. Social Media: Forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos) . Examples include, but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and other similar platforms or applications.
- 3.2. Copyright: A form of intellectual property law protecting original works of authorship including literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works. A copyright does not protect facts, ideas, systems or methods of operation – only the way these objects may be expressed.
- 3.3. Official University Social Media Site: A social media site which represents a University college, department, or official program. Any other social media site,

such as a student organization site, or an employee's personal social media site, is NOT subject to this policy.

**4. PROCEDURES**

**4.1. Branding for University Social Media**

For any Official University Social Media Site, the social media icon and/or profile image must comply with any applicable University branding standards. The social media icon and/or profile image can be a photograph related to the administrator's entity, an approved logo for that entity, or another appropriately branded image. All images should be 72 dpi resolution for web.

**4.2. Content for University Social Media (does not include photo policies)**

4.2.1. Administrators of the site, when in need to request authorization to hide or delete any material in violation of this policy, or to block a user from a site, should contact the University's social media manager or webmaster, who will consult with the Office of the General Counsel.

4.2.2. Administrators of an Official University Social Media Site should not engage in personal activity under the guise of any Official University Social Media Site.

4.2.3. Only public information may be posted on Official University Social Media Sites. Official University Social Media Sites should not be used for the communication of business transactions, including credit card or payment information, educational records protected by [FERPA](#), medical records protected by [HIPAA](#), or any other confidential information.

4.2.4. Social media content on an Official University Social Media Site may sometimes include photographs, audio or video. Site administrators are responsible for ensuring that social media content posted on the site is not infringing on the intellectual property rights of others. Intellectual property rights of content shared by the public will be governed by federal copyright law, the terms of service of the social media provider, and/or University policies.

4.2.5. Administrators are encouraged to link to source material whenever possible. This activity will reduce the spread of misinformation and drive traffic.

4.2.6. Administrators of University Social Media Sites should adhere to the policies for the social media platforms in which they are participating. These policies are constantly changing, and it is the administrator's duty to stay up to date.

4.3. Photos for University Social Media

4.3.1. If the administrator intends to publish a student photo on the site, in which the student can be recognized, then a signed photo release form from the student is needed. This form may be found on the University's [legal affairs web site](#).

4.3.2. When posting non-student photos, it is recommended that the administrator obtain written permission. This written permission can be accomplished in an e-mail or with the photo release form, as referenced in Section 4.3.1.

4.3.3. Administrators will not share any restricted-use photos.

5. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party: Associate Vice Chancellor for University Marketing,  
Communication and Media Relations

Review: Every three years on or before September 1

6. APPROVAL

Approved: Lisa Holdeman  
Associate Vice Chancellor for University Marketing, Communication  
and Media Relations

Jim McShan  
Senior Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

Renu Khator  
Chancellor

Date: November 16, 2018

REVISION LOG

<b>Revision Number</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>	<b>Description of Changes</b>
1	06/12/2015	Initial edition
2	11/16/2018	Revised definition for Social Media to reflect current operating requirements. Changed responsible party from Social Media Manager to Associate Vice Chancellor for University Marketing, Communication and Media Relations. Updated titled as applicable